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Description of document: Peace Corps policy documents re: handling of allegations by Volunteers or Trainees of misconduct, mismanagement, or violations of law or policy by Peace Corps staff, contractors, or other Volunteers or Trainees, 2009-2011

Released date: 21-September-2011

Posted date: 26-September-2011

Date/date range of document: 27-March-2009 – 03-February-2011

Source of document: Peace Corps
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September 21, 2011

RE: FOIA Request No. 11-158

This is in response to your Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request. Specifically, you request a copy of 1) IPS 1-09 – Handling of Volunteer/ Trainee Allegations, dated March 27, 2009, Office of General Counsel, Issuance Memo, authored by Carl Sosebee, 2 pages and 2) MS 2701 Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations, dated January 14, 2011, which supersedes IPS 1-09, also two pages in length.

We located five documents responsive to your request. MS 271 Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations dated January 14, 2011 was replaced on February 3, 2011. We are providing you a copy of MS 271 issued on February 3, 2011. Attached please find IPS 1-09 - Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations and Issuance Memo (3 pages) and MS 271 Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations and Issuance Memos (5 pages). These are the most responsive documents available. No pages were withheld. We are providing this at no cost to you.

I trust this is of assistance to you. If you have questions regarding this response, please feel free to contact me at 202-692-1236 or foia@peacecorps.gov.

Sincerely,

Denora Miller
FOIA Officer

OFFICE OF THE GENERAL COUNSEL

MEMORANDUM

To: All Staff

Through: Carl R. Sosebee, Acting General Counsel

From: Nancy G. Miller, Associate General Counsel
Nicola A. P. Cullen, Policy & Program Analyst

Date: March 27, 2009

Subject: Issuance of Interim Policy Statement 1-09 *Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations*

On March 27, 2009, the Director approved, and on March 27, 2009, the Peace Corps issued [Interim Policy Statement 1-09 *Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations*](#).

IPS 1-09 sets out Peace Corps' policy for handling allegations by Volunteers or Trainees of misconduct, mismanagement, or violations of law or policy.

Contact Information – If there are any questions regarding the new policy, contact the [Office of the General Counsel](#). Posts that cannot access the Intranet should send an e-mail to the [Office of the General Counsel](#) and they will be provided with copies of the revised manual section.

Instructions – Each Peace Corps office and post should print this policy, including the issuance memo, for inclusion in their Peace Corps Manual binders for use when electronic systems are unavailable.

IPS 1-09 - Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations

Date: March 27, 2009

Responsible Office: Office of the General Counsel

Issuance Memo

1.0 Purpose

The purpose of this Interim Policy Statement is to set out explicitly Peace Corps policies for handling allegations by a Volunteer or Trainee of misconduct, mismanagement, or violations of law or policy.

2.0 Policies

2.1 Volunteers/Trainees (V/Ts) must be informed that they should report to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) any activity which they reasonably believe constitutes a violation of federal law, rule, or regulation; mismanagement; serious misconduct; gross waste of funds; abuse of authority; or a substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety relating to the programs and operations of the Peace Corps. See MS 861 *Office of the Inspector General* . Such reports will be handled by the OIG as set forth in MS 861.

2.2 (a) V/Ts may also report such allegations to senior staff at post or to the appropriate Regional Director.

(b) Any Peace Corps staff member receiving an allegation from a V/T must treat the information with the utmost discretion and confidentiality consistent with appropriate handling of the allegation and applicable law, including where appropriate, referral to the OIG or other legal authorities.

(c) No Peace Corps staff person may retaliate in any manner against a V/T because the V/T reported an allegation under this subsection. Nothing in this IPS should be construed to exempt a V/T from the requirement to behave in accordance with MS 204 *Volunteer Conduct*.

(d) All allegations by V/Ts will be given serious consideration and review and will be handled and resolved or disposed of, as appropriate, by management and/or the OIG.

(e) Based upon the nature of the allegations and the totality of available facts, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the V/T's safety.

3.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.

Authored By Carl Sosebee
Mar 27, 2009

MEMORANDUM TO ALL STAFF

To: All Staff
From: Nicola A. P. Cullen, Committee Secretary
Date: January 14, 2011
Subject: New Manual Section – MS 271 *Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations*

On January 14, 2011, the Director approved and Peace Corps issued a new manual section: [MS 271 Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations](#). The new policy does the following:

- Continues the agency's policy in IPS 1-09 regarding the handling Volunteer/Trainee (V/T) allegations of misconduct, mismanagement, and violations of federal law or regulation.
 - Sets out the policy for handling V/T allegations or concerns regarding the conduct of host country nationals who are not Peace Corps staff and behavior that is beyond the legal jurisdiction of the Peace Corps.
 - Emphasizes the rights and obligations of V/Ts to report allegations or concerns to the Inspector General and senior staff at post or at Peace Corps headquarters and describes in greater detail how such allegations and concerns will be handled.
 - Stresses that allegations and concerns expressed by V/Ts are to be treated with utmost confidentiality; requires managers to ensure the safety of V/Ts reporting allegations or concerns; and prohibits any retaliation against a V/T for bringing allegations to the attention of appropriate officials.
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Contact Information – If there are any questions regarding the new policy, contact the [Office of Global Operations](#) or the [Office of Safety and Security](#). Posts that cannot access the intranet should send an e-mail to policy@peacecorps.gov and copies of the revised manual section will be provided.

Instructions – Each Peace Corps office and post should print this policy, including the issuance memo, for inclusion in their Peace Corps Manual binders for use when electronic systems are unavailable.

MEMORANDUM TO ALL STAFF

To: All Staff
From: Nicola A. P. Cullen, Committee Secretary
Date: February 3, 2011
Subject: Revisions to MS 271 *Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations*

On January 31, 2011, the Director approved and on February 3, 2011, Peace Corps issued revisions to manual section [MS 271 *Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations*](#). The revisions do the following:

- State that V/Ts can bring allegations or concerns about another V/T to the attention of Peace Corps.
 - Clarify that V/Ts can bring allegations or concerns about anyone outside the jurisdiction of Peace Corps.
 - State that nothing precludes Peace Corps from taking action against persons who knowingly or recklessly make false statements or accusations.
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Contact Information – If there are any questions regarding the new policy, contact the [Office of Global Operations](#) or the [Office of Safety and Security](#). Posts that cannot access the intranet should send an e-mail to policy@peacecorps.gov and copies of the revised manual section will be provided.

Instructions – Each Peace Corps office and post should print this policy, including the issuance memo, for inclusion in their Peace Corps Manual binders for use when electronic systems are unavailable.

MS 271 Handling of Volunteer/Trainee Allegations

Date: February 3, 2011

Responsible Office: Office of Safety and Security and Office of Global Operations

Supersedes: 01/14/2011; IPS 1-09 3/27/09

Issuance Memo

Issuance Memo 1/14/11

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6.0 Effective Date

1.0 Authority

The Peace Corps Act, 22 U.S.C. 2503 (b); Executive Order 12137 (1979)

2.0 Purpose

This Manual Section sets forth Peace Corps policies on the handling of allegations by Volunteers or Trainees of misconduct, mismanagement, or violations of law or policy by Peace Corps staff, contractors, or other Volunteers or Trainees or in connection with Peace Corps programs or

operations; and on the handling of allegations or other concerns of Volunteers or Trainees about the conduct of other individuals or organization, including host country nationals regarding behavior and other matters that are beyond the legal jurisdiction of Peace Corps.

3.0 Policies

- (a) Volunteers/Trainees (V/Ts) must be informed of their rights and Peace Corps expectations with respect to bringing to the attention of Peace Corps allegations of misconduct, mismanagement, violations of law or policy that relate to Peace Corps staff, contractors, other V/Ts, programs, and operations.
- (b) V/Ts must also be informed that they may discuss with Peace Corps staff allegations or concerns on topics or issues that are beyond the legal jurisdiction of Peace Corps, such as behavior by a local national with whom the V/T has regular contact but who does not work for Peace Corps or participate directly in a Peace Corps project or program.
- (c) V/Ts must be provided open access and appropriate channels in which to raise the types of allegations and concerns referred to in subsections (a) and (b) above, with an understanding and commitment that their allegations and concerns will be given appropriate attention; that no V/T will be retaliated against by Peace Corps staff for bringing forth allegations and concerns; and that management will take every step necessary to ensure the safety of any V/T.

4.0 Inspector General

With respect to the rights and Peace Corps expectations referred to in Section 3 (a) above, V/Ts must be informed that they should report to the Office of Inspector General (OIG) any activity which they reasonably believe constitutes (1) a violation of federal law, rule, or regulation; (2) mismanagement; (3) serious misconduct; (4) gross waste of funds; (5) abuse of authority; or (6) a substantial and specific danger to the public health and safety relating to the programs and operations of the Peace Corps. See MS 861. Such reports will be handled by the OIG as set forth in MS 861.

5.0 Handling Allegations and Concerns

- (a) V/Ts may report allegations and concerns referred to in Section 3.0 to senior staff at post, the appropriate Regional Director, Associate Director for Safety and Security, Associate Director for Global Operations, or other appropriate officer at Headquarters.
- (b) Any Peace Corps staff member who receives or has knowledge of a V/T allegation or concern must treat the information with the utmost discretion and confidentiality consistent with appropriate handling of such information and applicable law, including where appropriate, referral to the OIG or other legal authorities.
- (c) Based upon the nature of the allegations or concerns and the totality of available facts, appropriate measures must be taken to ensure the V/T's safety. If there is any uncertainty, it is critical that managers err on the side of caution and take every measure to ensure V/T safety.
- (d) No Peace Corps staff person may retaliate in any manner against a V/T because the V/T reported an allegation or concern under this subsection.
- (e) All allegations or concerns identified by V/Ts will be given serious consideration and review and will be handled, resolved or disposed of, as appropriate, by management and/or the OIG.
- (f) Nothing in this Manual Section should be construed to exempt a V/T from the requirements to follow the rules and policies set forth in MS 204 *Volunteer Conduct*, or to preclude the Peace Corps from taking appropriate action against persons who knowingly or recklessly make false statements or accusations.

6.0 Effective Date

The effective date is the date of issuance.

Authored By Nicola Cullen
Feb 03, 2011